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BIRTH CONTROL

Its Medical and Ethical Aspects

BY

A DOCTOR

AND BY

A PRIEST

FORTIETH THOUSAND

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BIRTH CONTROL

ITS MEDICAL AND ETHICAL ASPECTS

BY A DOCTOR AND BY A PRIEST

A SURVEY of birth control can conveniently be made under four main headings :—

Firstly. In relation to broad racial and population problems.

Secondly. The practice as it affects the individual and the family unit.

Thirdly. Its medical aspects.

Fourthly. Its moral or ethical aspects.

RACIAL CONSIDERATIONS

"We have to face the fact that the practice of contraception has become widespread before there has been time to think out its implications, ethical or otherwise."

These are the words of the recently published Report of the Special Committee appointed by the National Council of Public Morals in connection with the investigations of the National Birth-Rate Commission.

For the last fifty years the birth-rate in this country has been steadily falling.

Dr. Stevenson and Sir Arthur Newsholme have shown that the standardised birth-rate for England and Wales fell 6 per cent. during the period 1881–1893—13 per cent. in subsequent twelve years, and 13 per cent. from 1903-1911.

In Ireland the standardised birth-rate has risen during the periods cited above. Australia is quoted by Sir William Beveridge as "the only country in the world where a fall in fertility has been checked

and gone back the other way, showing an actual rise from 1900 to 1910."

Sir William Beveridge, like Sir Arthur Newsholme, considers that "the revolutionary fall in human fertility in Europe since 1880 is due mainly, if not wholly, to deliberate prevention." He also considers that "the sudden spread of the practice of prevention after 1880 cannot be connected with any change of economic conditions increasing the need for restricting families, and must be attributed to the invention of more effective means of prevention—together with active propaganda." He also traces a direct connection between birth control and the decrease in marriages which has occurred in the period named, typically in Holland. This latter observation is of particular interest in view of the contention by the advocates of birth control that these practices will be certain to facilitate early marriage. In a speech at the Eugenic Educational Society Meeting in August, 1924, the same authority comments on the exaggerated pessimism of some eugenist propagandists in Britain. He disclaims the fact that there is any solid evidence of an increase in the number of those who can be described as unfit.

At the same time, Sir William Beveridge is emphatic on the point that the *present tendency of birth control is dysgenic*—that is, the most desirable classes of the population are producing least. Dr. Stevenson has shown in his evidence before the 2nd National Birth-Rate Commission, that the greater survival amongst the better-to-do classes goes only a small way towards compensating for their lower birth-rate. Even the most ardent advocates of

birth control have to agree that *at present birth control is being practised by the very class of the population in which it is the most undesirable.* But these propagandists, while admitting the facts, proceed to prophesy, on what premises is not at all clear, that in the near future birth control will actually cease to be dysgenic and become eugenic!

"*Birth control,*" says Sir William Beveridge,[1] "*came by accident and not because it was needed.*"

Birth Control and Vice

The propaganda in favour of birth control is no new propaganda. It was not new even in Malthus's time, and the neo-Malthusian doctrines, which would, no doubt, have deeply shocked Malthus himself, have had their counterpart in the days preceding the decline and fall of ancient Greece and Rome. History shows us that birth control, far from causing a decrease in vice, coincides with the spread of the most degrading vices and a definite increase in abortions—and we must recognise the fact that a nation given up to this practice may have to face its own political and national extinction.

The Case of France

In wading through neo-Malthusian literature one is rather struck with the very misleading references to the case of France. Yet in the France of to-day we have an actual example of a people who have adopted neo-Malthusian practices widely for a considerable period of time—a nation, therefore, which can be profitably studied as a "test" case.

Impartial and scientific sociologists in France

[1] *The Ethics of Birth Control*, 1925.

deplore the growing practice of abortions, of divorces, and of sexual irregularities and excesses, which some of them correlate with the prevalence of birth control.

I will quote from a *non-medical* writer on Contraception[1] whose books, though they have been banned in America, are widely disseminated in this country, and who was described by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Cave, in a recent famous Appeal Case in the House of Lords, as " carrying on her campaign by means of literature not less obscene than that for which Charles Bradlaugh was prosecuted, and of such a nature as to infringe the criminal law which forbids such publications," and of whose writings Viscount Finlay said on the same occasion : " It will be found that the plaintiff's books not only advocate such methods (as Bradlaugh's), but contain what is obscene, whatever view may be taken of such methods."

Lord Finlay further stated : " We were referred in the course of the argument to certain passages of the book of such a nature that they were not read aloud. These books have a very large circulation, and for my part I cannot doubt that they are calculated to have a most deplorable effect upon the young of both sexes."[2]

This writer mentioned above states : " It is not generally stated that since 1920 *contraception* has been made criminal in France, and what she is suffering from to-day are *abortions*, and the sterility induced by venereal diseases and various abnormalities."

We find this same writer further asserting in this

[1] M. Stopes, Ph.D., D.Sc.

[2] Law Reports, Appeal Cases, 1925, Part I. February 4th.

same publication, entitled *Contraception*; "Poor France! Unless the 1920 law (against contraception) is swiftly revised *she will be upon the dangerous slope of Race Suicide indeed.*" Comment, I think, is unnecessary.

The disaster which has overtaken France dates, of course, from before the Franco-Prussian war, and has especially attracted attention for the last twenty-five years. At the present time men of all shades of religious and political opinion are exercised to try and find a remedy for the stationary or decreasing population, the lack of workmen and the depopulation of the French Colonies.

In 1814 the population of France made up 35 per cent. of the total population of the great powers—France, Great Britain and Ireland, Austria, Germany; in 1913 only 13 per cent. of this total.

In 1789 the population of France was greater by 14,000,000 than that of Great Britain and Ireland, and was only 2,000,000 less than that of Germany. By the year 1880, Austria had surpassed her, in 1895 England, and, recently, Italy.

To take the year 1910, the excess of births over deaths in Germany was 880,000, in Italy 460,000, in Great Britain 410,000, in Holland 90,000, and in France only 70,000. The present state of affairs is that of an almost stationary population, emigration has practically ceased, and the immigration of foreigners is increasing.

Modern Tendencies

There was, perhaps, never a time when people talked and wrote so much about the responsibilities of parenthood and practised them so little.

A new generation of women has sprung up—a generation universally acclaimed as fitter, healthier, and more normal than ever before—yet a generation which is rapidly acquiring the habit of talking and thinking as if it would be reduced to permanent invalidism by a family half the size of those reared by our unathletic grandmothers. Has there ever been a time in the history of our country when love of luxury, distaste for a simple, hard life, and the unwillingness to undergo hardship and make sacrifices were more marked than they are to-day? From our upper classes, the new rich and the new poor alike, the cry goes up: "Let us have a good time—*an easy time.*" Our working-class, is it to be wondered at that they too echo the cry?—it is so human to want to get away from suffering and discomfort of all sorts. Some enthusiasts talk and act as if we should shortly attain the state when there would be:—

(1) No sickness.
(2) No poverty.
(3) Not more than three children in each family.
(4) A dole or a pension or work (a bad third, this last) for everybody.

In other words, an ethically "Prussianised" world as an ideal to be aimed at.

The Normal Woman

It cannot be too emphatically stated and repeated that the *normal woman is not exhausted by bearing children.* The *abnormal* woman may be exhausted by a trifling illness, or by having her appendix removed, or by the birth of an only child. Of

course, bad midwifery and meddlesome midwifery may cause invalidism in any previously healthy woman, just as disease in her partner may, but it would be as logical to argue that because some houses are badly built and damp, therefore we must not live in houses, as to say that, because some women suffer from the effects of having children, therefore all women suffer so.

Nothing gives one a clearer view of the subject than extensive experience in a very big city where all classes of women of the lower middle and working class, normal and abnormal, in large numbers pass through the physician's hands. To gain a wide and balanced view in these matters is not easy, and one may easily form biassed opinions if only cases of disease or abnormality are seen. Cases could be instanced—many of them—to prove this thesis, but the cause of truth has suffered much from the type of mind that insists on quoting special cases as pegs on which to hang its own pet theory.

Social Conditions

In this work, and at this stage of the controversy we need *facts*, and not theories. Much hard, detailed and impartial research work has yet to be done.

Perhaps it may be of interest to refer to some research work undertaken in a big Maternity and Child Welfare Department recently.

Investigation was made into the social, hygienic, and economic conditions under which the poorest of our working class—or, perhaps it would be more correct to say our workless class—was existing in a big city, and for this purpose detailed enquiry was made into the health and social conditions of

five hundred very poor families. The enquiry was undertaken by no less than twelve people—all Health Visitors—on *unselected cases* taken at random from the poorest section of our population.

Three hundred and fifty of these families were families of over five children, which will be called Class A, while 150 were families of under five children, which will be called Class B. The average number of children in Class A was 8. The average number in Class B was 2.9. Overcrowding in Class A was considerably greater than in Class B, the maximum average number of rooms inhabited by the family being only 3.7 in Class A, and 2.65 in Class B, and the sanitary conditions were decidedly less good. (Only 16 per cent. W.C.'s as against 32 per cent. for Class B.) It was found that the health of the mother was definitely slightly better in Class A than in Class B, while the health of the children was very markedly so. Two further points worthy of notice were : (1) that the maternal health level was decidedly higher than the paternal, and (2) that, even in this, the most improvident and fertile class of the whole community, the class of the casual labourer (nearly all of them out of work), the average interval between the pregnancies (every miscarriage or still-birth being counted as a confinement), was as much as two years and two months in the series of 350 big families, and of two years in the series of 150 small families.

The Home and the Family

People who have insufficiently studied the question tend to assume that "frequent child-bearing" means having a child every year. Of course, these

cases are exceedingly rare, but unfortunately they tend to catch the eye of the enthusiast and get repeatedly quoted much to the detriment of truth and science.

Mr. Harold Cox has said, in his evidence before the Special Committee appointed by the National Council of Public Morals: "In practice, unless married couples employ methods of birth control, babies succeed one another so rapidly that the mother has not time to recover her strength and the children are deprived of the full benefit of a mother's care." This sentence is simply packed full of inaccuracies, and shows profound ignorance of the conditions under which our working-class population is living, as well as of the physiology of reproduction and the laws of fertility.

It is not in the least true that births succeed one another with unchecked rapidity. The series of 350 exceedingly fertile families with young parents will show this. Moreover, the woman who has a child every four or five years is far more apt to suffer both mentally and physically than the woman who has one every two or three years. The agreement of prominent obstetricians is almost universal on this point. Then, as regards "mothering," what are we to say to the unfortunate mother of one or two small babies not old enough to take each other out? She complains that she herself can never get out, and the babies can never get any fresh air. Where there is a healthy bunch of five or six children, the little brothers and sisters act as nurses—and what incomparable nurses they usually make—dragging the family party forth to the green parks and pleasant places of our big cities.

The "*only*" child is very far from being the healthiest child.

This study would tend to show that many more statistics and facts of a similar nature, collected by reliable public health workers, should be amassed, and that great harm is being done by hasty statements based on *a priori* reasoning.

It is not difficult to collect evidence from our greatest medical authorities in the field of gynæcology and obstetrics, that is very damaging to the cause of contraception. In the important discussion on sterility at a meeting of the Section of Obstetrics and Gynæcology of the Royal Society of Medicine, in May, 1921, Dr. Arthur Giles expressed the view that a nation with a falling birth-rate was usually a decadent nation. He spoke strongly and definitely about the ill-effects of contraceptives, and of the unhappiness caused by childless marriages.

Dr. Gibbons instanced cases where the use of contraceptives had brought on sterility, and said that all newly married couples should be warned that they took precautions against conception at their own risk, and that they could not break physiological laws with impunity. Another authority, Dr. Herbert Spencer, who out of his vast experience is an uncompromising opponent of birth control, corroborated Dr. Gibbons's statement as to the frequent causation of permanent sterility by preventives.

Professor Louise McIlroy also thought that the section should protest against the growing use by women of contraceptives, and dwelt on the many neuroses and illnesses attributable to the false stimulation of the sex instinct.

Lady Barrett and many others speak of the harmful effects of the methods so widely advocated and in use at present.

Those of us who are familiar with the habits and mentality of our working-class population will at once think of the utter impossibility of ever getting the lowest strata of our population to take the complicated precautions required by the advocates of the methods of birth control. In Mr. Harold Cox's evidence before the Special Committee on the Ethics of Birth Control, even he is forced to admit that "There are some people so low down that you cannot get them to take any precautions for their own improvement, they are too degraded," and when questioned as to his suggested remedy for this state of things, he makes the unique proposal: "I think all you can do is to have women doctors going round telling them."

The problem of the feeble-minded will, of course, not be touched at all by contraceptives.

Professor Henry Corby[1] considers all contraceptives inimical to the health of both husband and wife. Professor Fothergill[1] thinks the wife's health only is harmed. Professor Louise McIlroy is emphatic in her disapproval of contraception.

Perhaps one of the most widespread fallacies among the very numerous non-medical people who interest themselves so actively in the subject of birth control, is the assumption that the bearing of children is essentially pathological. Yet in a series of five hundred very poor families the average of the maternal health was very definitely higher than the average of the paternal health. Under modern

[1] *The Practitioner.* July, 1923.

methods of preventive midwifery, and with the widespread increase of ante-natal clinics, it cannot be too vigorously stated and repeated, that marriage and child-bearing are not productive of continuously recurring disease and ill-health to the mother. Where such ill-health occurs, it is nearly always the result of one of two things: Firstly, bad and meddlesome midwifery at the time of confinement, together with absence of good preventive work in the form of ante-natal care of the expectant mother which are productive of much unnecessary ill-health among married women. These evils are, however, preventable, and every effort is being made all over the country under the auspices, and with the active encouragement, of the Ministry of Health, to raise the standard of midwifery and improve the health of our mothers. Secondly, acquired venereal infection. This can be, and should be, treated medically, and—it must be explained—will never be prevented, will, indeed, rather be increased by the advocated methods of birth control which permit free licence to sexual passions. The offspring of a mother who has had efficient anti-syphilitic treatment before the birth of the child should be healthy, and free from congenital syphilis, while gonorrheal infection in the child can be avoided by appropriate medical measures. It seems essential to point this out as certain non-medical writers on the subject seem to be quite ignorant of these facts.

More Self-Control Needed by Men

Another very important point that seems to be lost sight of by the advocates of birth control, is the fact

that *most of the suffering of our working-class women* arises from the unrestrained licence and want of self-control of their husbands, especially after drinking bouts. These cases are not, I think, so numerous as some women social workers would have us believe, but they are very painful and essentially a problem of our lower working-class population. Birth control, by removing every check to licence, simply makes the position of these women very much worse.

The Ethics of Artificial Birth Control

It may be conceded that the ethical side is really the crux of the whole matter. Conception-control is not merely an individual problem—it is a national problem, and it is essentially a moral problem, just as abortion is essentially a moral as well as a medical problem. No important medical and sociological problem can ever be dissociated from its moral essence which is at the very foundation of human existence.

Let us then proceed to consider the question from a purely ethical point of view, arguing simply from human nature as such and from its activities. We shall see that conception-control is always and in all circumstances immoral, because it is opposed to the Natural Law.

The Laws of the Divine Creator

God in the work of creation followed the plan of His own wisdom. That plan, first conceived in the divine mind, and then executed in the external

work, was for His own great ends. Those ends are subserved by the ends of every individual creature; every created thing has its predestined part in the scheme of the universe. This is the end of its creation, and the creature is under a law to strive to its own particular end. This striving or tendency is often called an appetite. In respect of inanimate or irrational creatures the word law is used in a loose sense, for law truly implies a will in the subject as well as in the lawgiver. The inferior creatures have no freewill; they are under necessity to follow their appetites, and so to pursue their ends. That is the basis and significance of physical law, which is inevitable. Hydrogen must always have an affinity for oxygen; the crystal must always tend to its specific form, the magnet must always attract the iron; the animal is necessarily drawn by its appetite for food. But man is free. He, too, is under obligation to pursue the ends laid down for him by the wisdom of God in the designing of his nature, but he must do that freely. In him law has its full significance. He must know its meaning and will its fulfilment. Every creature then, human or infrahuman, has its special tendencies, tendencies which specify its nature, tendencies by which we can determine the nature; for nature and tendencies, or operations, are correlatives. It is obvious that God must will the accomplishment of His plan, and He must expect every creature to do its part in accomplishing that plan. Now we are only concerned with man, and man is bound by the law to fulfil the divine plan, to pursue the ends of his nature. This law for men, which is the substantial reflection of the divine

plan in their regard, is called the Natural Law. The divine plan itself is called the Eternal Law.

The determination of the Natural Law is equivalent to the discerning of natural morality, and it is a problem beset with many difficulties. Hence the confusion and conflict about the details of conduct, and the necessity of establishing certain criteria by which we may discern the implications of the Natural Law. Moralists of various schools have laid down many different criteria, and without entering into their argument[1] we may take it that some of these are of obvious validity. Let us apply two or three of them to the subject we are discussing.

I have indicated that man's tendencies or appetites are clearly directed to certain ends of nature. With the appetite there goes a faculty for the pursuit of the object of the appetite, and often some corresponding bodily organ. Appetite, faculty, organ, end (or object) are obviously related to one another (to suggest otherwise would be to cast a slur on the divine wisdom), and each may serve as an index to the others. Man has an appetite for communicating the contents of his mind, and the faculty of speech ; he has an appetite for food, and the faculty of eating and digestion ; the appetite for the reproduction of his kind and the sexual faculty. Our first criterion then is this : the act of a faculty is naturally good when it pursues the natural object of the corresponding appetite ; it is always a bad act so to use a faculty as to oppose the realisation of the natural end of that faculty. See what the natural tendency is, and what is the

[1] The full discussion will be found in Dr. Cronin's work, *The Science of Ethics*, to which we are deeply indebted for the outlines of the ethical argument.

ultimate object of that tendency; consider the faculty at man's disposal for the prosecution of the tendency, for the attainment of the end; and then you may determine that if a man uses the faculty and simultaneously sets out to frustrate and defeat the end, he is doing wrong, sinning against the Law of Nature. For the *unnatural* use of a faculty two conditions are necessary: the faculty must be used, and it must be used so as to frustrate its proper end.

Now the proper end of the sexual faculty is procreation. To exercise that faculty while preventing conception is unnatural, and so unlawful. This is so fundamental that the Church has nothing to do with it except to promulgate it. She did not make the law; she cannot abrogate the law or dispense from the law. In the same way, lying is wrong, because it is the using of the faculty of speech while defeating the proper end of speech.

The advocate of birth control may be unskilled in the science of ethics, but he has a natural feeling of the rightness of its conclusions, and he instinctively counters this argument by suggesting that the end of the sexual faculty is not procreation, but the physical expression of love. That is one object of the appetite but only a proximate object. That it is not the ultimate object, or the primary object, is too obvious to demand elaboration. The immorality, the breach of the Natural Law, is not in the pursuit of the proximate object, which is quite good as far as it goes, and which is designed as a means to ensure the full carrying out of the law of procreation, but in simultaneously frustrating the ultimate end. Just so, there is no harm in

savouring one's food; but the idea of eating for the mere pleasure of taste to the exclusion of digestion is unnatural; hence our disgust at the old Roman *vomitorium*.

Another but less fundamental criterion is this: that act is a bad act which, if it were universally practised, would result in injury to the race. Such an act could not be natural, for nature can never tend to its own destruction. Observe that the evil effect must not be a result of the intensity of the action, too much or too little. That would be to play directly into the hands of the prohibitionists. It must be the result of the act itself as such. Also, let us observe that this criterion merely manifests the immorality of the act; it does not constitute that immorality. This is most significant in our present enquiry. Even though the practice of birth control in the individual case were not injurious, that would not alter the fact that it is immoral; it is shown to be immoral by the consideration that if it were universally practised the race would soon be extinct.

Finally, I would point to the fact that this practice is opposed to the moral feelings. By this I mean that the spontaneous reaction of any unsophisticated person is a feeling of repulsion and disgust. It is true that nowadays an unceasing propaganda and the sponsorship of men of learning and respectability have blunted these feelings and invested the practice with a cloak of prudence, nay, with a halo of sanctity; but that does not touch the validity of the criterion. Why all this appeal to patriotism, prudence, beautiful motherhood, if it be not designed to combat the instinctive disgust for the whole thing?

Some Objections Answered

Let me now, in the light of the principles I have laid down, answer one or two objections. It is commonly alleged that the whole process of medical science is in the direction of the control of nature, that every operation is an interference with the laws of nature and that therefore those who condemn birth control as unnatural might just as well condemn all medicine and surgery at once on the same grounds. In the schools we should answer such an objection very succinctly by a distinction : the laws of nature here mentioned are the physical laws, not the strict natural law involving morality of which I have been speaking. Is it not obvious that the objector is using the word " unnatural " in two distinct senses, and " Law of Nature " in two distinct senses, and neglecting to observe the distinction ? The law of nature which he boasts of controlling is the normal growth and progress of the disease. With that is involved the law of physical nature, the law of the tendencies of inanimate or irrational natures. Those laws themselves he cannot control. All he can do is to alter conditions, introduce new forces or allow restrained forces to come into play. He can no more interfere with the laws, the tendencies of such natures, than he can destroy the affinity of hydrogen for chlorine, or change the atomic weight of carbon. It simply can't be done. But he can remove hydrogen from the proximity of chlorine and prevent their combining, and he can interpose a screen between himself and radium emanation ; he can cut out a cancer, and he can separate the slag from the ore ; he can stop a hæmorrhage as he can caulk a

leaky ship; but the laws of nature go on, irresistible and invariable. Now the law of nature whose breach is possible and immoral is that law of nature which binds the freewill of man, which can only be broken from the interior and not from the exterior, which men break when they pervert the use of their own faculties and frustrate the objects of their own appetites. If you drink a large quantity of poison, you break the law of nature which forbids suicide; if you take a minimal dose of belladonna for your stomach's sake, you do not break the law; in both cases you will introduce new forces into the system of your body, but in neither case do you for a moment suspend the physical law, the necessary natural tendencies of the substances involved.

Another objection takes the form of retorting the argument. Surely it is unnatural they say, for a married pair to bring more children into the world than they can nurture, unnatural for a woman to ruin her health or risk her life by too many pregnancies. In extreme cases these things may be unnatural, though it would be somewhat difficult to prove it.

No Certain Method of Artificial Birth Control Exists

Mr. Harold Cox, in his evidence before the Special Commission, says: "Those theologians who condemn birth control appear to shut their eyes to the fact that the practice of abortion is widespread throughout the world. *Married women would no longer be driven to seek refuge in this dangerous*

practice if they were taught satisfactory methods of birth control."

Mr. Cox appears to shut his eyes to the facts: (1) That in countries, such as France, where birth control has enormously increased, the practice of abortion has increased *pari passu*—one cause being, no doubt, (2) the second fact to which Mr. Cox shuts his eyes, namely, that there *is* no "satisfactory" and certainly no *sure* method of artificial birth control.

A parallelism can be drawn between this increase in the number of abortions and the increase in the number of divorces when birth control is rife. Let us be quite honest. The desire for birth control in a nation has, history teaches us, only become manifest, i.e., widespread, when that nation has become decadent and already effete. It is easy to confuse cause and effect, and to say that a nation has perished *because* it has practised birth control, and, indeed, this might be a perfectly true saying, but it would be truer to get to the root cause, and to say that the widespread demand for birth control could not possibly exist if Christian and not Pagan principles had prevailed. Christianity teaches and practises self-denial and self-control—not the wild seeking after every form of material pleasure and self-indulgence. Christianity regards man as not a mere animal satisfying its urgent animal instincts, but as a being with an indefinitely higher destiny, capable of freewill and of self-control in the highest sense.

Some people argue that artificial birth control should be practised only in cases of grave economic or medical necessity. Who is to draw the dividing

line between " grave " and ordinary cases? Sociological experience shows that once birth control *gets hold* of a people it is not possible to limit its spread in certain directions. You cannot say: " Thus far and no farther; stop, before the race is moribund."

The advocates of birth control state that self-control is impossible. The experience of numberless people proves the contrary.

Conclusion

Sociologically, Medically, and Ethically

Many of the supposed reasons on which birth controllers base their propaganda can be shown to be quite fallacious, such as the assertions :—

(1) That large families are very detrimental to a mother's health.

(2) That " only " children, or two or three in a family, stand a much better chance in life.

(3) That only *desired* children at *desired* times should be born.

(4) That the sex instinct should be freely indulged in for mere sex-gratification, quite designedly apart from any possible responsibilities it normally may entail.

(5) That self-control is impossible and harmful for men.

The Special Committee appointed by the National Council of Public Morals in connection with the investigations of the National Birth-Rate Commission, who have recently issued their report under the title *Ethics of Birth Control*, state, among some of

their final conclusions, that: "Our knowledge is not such as to justify either the advocacy or the condemnation of these means on the ground of alleged dangers of over-population. . . . The weightiest argument for birth control is found in the economic circumstances (wages, grossly inadequate housing, and the like), of many persons. The ultimate remedy lies in the amelioration of these conditions."

A Note of Reservation, signed by Canon Lyttleton (late Headmaster of Eton), Dr. Letitia Fairfield, Canon Simpson, and Mrs. Clay, states that: "In addition to other evils . . . the most baneful will be the inevitable encouragement of immorality among unmarried persons. If contraceptives are in any circumstances permissible for normal married people, we, for our part, do not see how any adequate answer can be given to those who desire a like safeguard in unauthorised connections, or to those who practise the most degrading forms of sensual indulgence."

In view, then, of these facts, and of many others which it is obviously not possible to do justice to in the scope of a short paper, it would seem to be in the highest degree disastrous for the race, for the Empire, for the individual, if birth control were to increase to any extent in our country—that any sanction by the Ministry of Health of such teaching in public, State-aided clinics would be a national calamity—and that such sanction would alienate a very large and influential section of the rate-paying population of our Empire.

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